



Daily Astorian file

This area of Uniontown waterfront north of Marine Drive is part of the Bridge Vista phase of the Riverfront Vision Plan.

Bridge Vista: Moving ahead

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The City Council voted 4-1 to advance Bridge Vista with an amendment that would ensure no variances could be granted to building height restrictions over the river. City Councilor Drew Herzig voted "no."

Councilors rejected a motion by Herzig to restrict all development north of the Astoria Riverfront Trolley tracks to the height of the riverbank, and all development south of the tracks to 25 feet high. Herzig and Councilor Cindy Price voted for the motion, while Mayor Arline LaMear, Councilor Zetty Nemlowill and Councilor Russ Warr voted against the idea.

A final vote on Bridge Vista is expected at a council meeting later this month.

Residents filled the council chamber to urge councilors to impose greater development restrictions and prevent new buildings that could block views. No resident who testified at the meeting spoke in favor of the Bridge Vista plan, which was approved unanimously by the Planning Commission in April.

"This is an area where there were canneries," LaMear said. "It is a waterfront. It's a working waterfront. And I think that the vision plan spells out that there are certain areas that should be open for views, and certain areas that are more useful for development."

The mayor questioned whether the overwhelming opposition from residents at the meeting, which included many who have fought development projects over the years, reflected the range of public opinion in the city.

"Not everyone in this city — not everyone — feels that there should be no development along the river," LaMear said.

Nemlowill described the Riverfront Vision Plan as a "balanced approach to commerce and conservation."

While Bridge Vista would not eliminate future development over the river, she said, "it limits it drastically in size, mass, width, with view corridors."

Herzig and Price believe, however, that public opinion is clearly against development over the river.

"I just really do not know how long the City Council can continue to ignore the wishes of the majority of its constituents," Price said.

Pressure to develop

The Riverfront Vision Plan was the city's response to the tremendous development pressure along the river before the recession undermined the financing and market demand for the projects.

The plan was adopted in 2009 but the first phase — the Civic Greenway leg from 16th Street to 41st Street — was not approved by the City Council until last year. Bridge Vista, which covers Portway to Second Street, is the second phase. The Urban Core — Second Street to 16th — and the Neighborhood Greenway — 41st Street to Alderbrook Lagoon — are scheduled to follow.

The goal is for the city to have new planning requirements to guide future development.

Bridge Vista would replace existing guidelines that are more permissive. "Essentially, you could have a wall of buildings along this area, along the river," said Matt Hastie, a city consultant.

Many of the residents who oppose Bridge Vista acknowledge the new planning requirements would be an improvement. New condominiums, hotels, bars and restaurants, and fuel terminals, for example, would be prohibited over the water. On shore, a pedestrian friendly zone and broader commercial uses could serve both residents and tourists.

But many do not think the restrictions are nearly strong enough to protect views.

"People don't come to Astoria, or live in Astoria, because they have such nice buildings on the river," Alan Batchelder, a retired family therapist, told the City Council.

George "Mick" Hague, a retired teacher who lives at Columbia House, an over-the-water condominium near Second Street he considers "a wart" on the riverfront, said views of the river are enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

"Why would we want to destroy that?" he asked. "Why?"

Astoria City Council approves budget

Budget includes money for new ladder truck, sewer and water fee hikes

By **DERRICK DePLEGGE**
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council voted Monday night to adopt a \$41.3 million budget for the new fiscal year that starts in July, with money for a new ladder truck for the Fire De-

partment and improvements to the Astoria Aquatic Center, the Astoria Public Library and Ocean View Cemetery.

The budget is an increase over the \$37.2 million spending plan for this fiscal year. General-fund spending is \$10.6 million, up from \$9.2 million this year.

Water and sewer rates will each rise by 2 percent and a surcharge to help pay for the city's \$40 million to \$50 million sewer improvement project will climb by 5 percent. The city is under a federal mandate to reduce wastewater flowing into the Columbia River.

The budget contains \$500,000 toward a new \$880,000 ladder truck. The outlay also includes \$250,000 for repairs to the aquatic center, \$80,000 for a new roof for the public library and \$72,000 for weed eradication and re-seeding at Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton and other city park grounds.

Before agreeing to approve the budget, City Councilor Drew Herzig won assurances the city would address two issues that were flagged during the budget committee's review of the spending plan.

City staff has promised to get a new contract with

the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce before releasing money to the chamber from the Promote Astoria fund. The chamber has not had a formal contract with the city for the past decade and has not been filing semi-annual financial reports required under city code.

City staff will also request a letter from the Astoria Rescue Mission stipulating the mission will follow the city's non-discrimination policy before releasing grant money. Herzig has alleged the Christian mission that helps the homeless discriminates against women and same-sex couples.

BUSINESS

Unemployment down slightly in Clatsop County

The Daily Astorian

As spring progresses into summer, seasonally adjusted unemployment rates continue inching downward across northwest Oregon, according to statistics from the Oregon Employment Department.

In Clatsop County, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate over April was 5.1 percent, slightly down from 5.3 percent in March. It was lower than the statewide (5.1 percent) and national (5.4 percent) rates.

A gain of 460 jobs is normal for April, but the county added only 310, leaving total nonfarm payroll employment at 17,350 jobs. The private sector added 300 jobs, and government employment inched up by 10 jobs. Leisure and hospitality grew by 240 jobs; food manufacturing and professional and business services each added 40; transportation, warehousing and utilities cut 70. State government added 20 jobs in April, as it typically does for the summer season.

April's total nonfarm payroll employment in Clatsop County was 170 more than last year, a growth of 1 percent. Industries adding the most jobs over the past year included leisure and hospitality (210),

education and health services (100), and professional and business services (40). The industries shedding the most jobs in the past year were retail trade (120), food manufacturing (70) and paper manufacturing (40).

Columbia County

In Columbia County, April's 6.7 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was down slightly from the previous month and nearly 1 percent down from the previous year.

A gain of 70 jobs is normal for the month, and the county added 100, leaving total nonfarm payroll employment at 10,250 jobs. The private sector gained all 100 jobs, and government employment was unchanged. Retail trade added 40 jobs; and educational and health services gained 30.

Total nonfarm employment in April was 80 more than the year before, a gain of a little less than 1 percent. Private sector employment was unchanged, and government accounted for all of the increase. Local governments, mostly school districts, added 40 jobs over the year, and state government added 30 jobs. Some of the state jobs are likely to be just summer positions.

Tillamook County

The 5.2 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Tillamook County was barely down from the previous month but 1.3 percent lower than the year prior.

A gain of 220 jobs was expected for the month, but the county added only 210, leaving total nonfarm payroll employment at 8,660 jobs. The private sector grew by 170 jobs and governments chipped in 40. The growth was driven by the leisure and hospitality industry, which

added 70 jobs, food manufacturing (+40) and retail trade (+30). State and local governments each added 20 jobs, which is not unusual as the summer season begins.

April's total nonfarm employment was 190 more than the year before, a growth of 2.3 percent. The private sector added 130 jobs, and governments added 60. Industries adding the most jobs included food manufacturing (60); and educational and health services (60). Leisure and hospitality was down 60 jobs over the year.

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Summer Reading 2015 Every Hero has a Story!



Kick-off Parties

Saturday, June 6
10:00 am - Warrenton Community Library
503-861-3919

Saturday, June 13
10:30 am - Astoria Public Library
503-325-7323 www.astorialibrary.org

11:30 am - Seaside Public Library
503-738-6742 www.seasidelibrary.org

REPTILE MAN
Thursday, June 18
10:30 am - Astoria Public Library
1:30 pm - Seaside Public Library,
4:00 pm - Warrenton Community Library
at Assembly of God Church 1365 S. Main

CARNIVOROUS PLANTS
Tuesday, June 23
10:30 am - Astoria Public Library
1:00 pm - Seaside Public Library,
4:00 pm - Warrenton Community Library
at Assembly of God Church 1365 S. Main

Contact your local library to learn about weekly summer programs (birth-teen). Weekly programs also offered at Jewell School 503-755-2451
Hilda Lahti Elementary 503-458-6162

Ask about free library cards for kids!

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